

AUG 10 1949



# SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

*July*  
1949



# Miscellany

Our Secretary, Richard M. Leonard, attended the recent convention of the Izaak Walton League in Denver, and was elected a National Director of the League. We are glad of this further cementing of our connection with the League. It is one of the strongest conservation forces in the country, and has been in the front of many of the recent conservation battles. We have come to rely on its support and leadership, and to recognize the value of united effort in mutual understanding.

You will read something about jeeps in Mr. Miller's article on the Wilderness Conference. Here is more about them.

The Sublette County Outfitters Association of Wyoming has passed a resolution expressing its objection to jeeps off the established roadways in the national forest areas, declaring that in the opinion of the association, they are detrimental to the forest, are a fire hazard, contribute to erosion problems, and are destructive to fish and game. According to L. W. Isaacs, sec-

retary of the Wyoming Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs which represents 7000 organized sportsmen, they have the same feeling about this, and would support any legislation or other action taken to limit and prohibit motorized vehicles from roaming at will in our national forests.

It looks as if the "man-made mules" will just have to stick to man-made areas.

Photographs of the High Sierra by William G. Bancroft of Palo Alto, are now on exhibit in the San Francisco clubrooms.

Visit the Sierra Club exhibit at the State Fair, September 1-10.

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Cover: Unnamed peak in the Karakoram. By Vittorio Sella. Reproduced from display prints in the Frederick H. Morley Collection.	

**THE SIERRA CLUB**, founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast. Since these resources receive best protection from those who know them well, the club has long conducted educational activities, under the committees listed below, to make them known. Participation is invited in the program to preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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# Sierra Club Bulletin

VOLUME 34

JULY, 1949

NUMBER 7

... TO EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE NATURAL MOUNTAIN SCENE ...

## For the July Record

### *All Hands to Norden*

The urgency of the reconstruction program now beginning at Clair Tappaan Lodge will call for great effort from work parties throughout the summer and fall. The long range plans of the Lodge Committee must be compressed into a single season to comply with recently announced requirements of the state housing authorities. Already the floor in the basement has been lowered and construction begun on a fireproof room which will contain the new steam-heating plant and all other combustion units. The bare iron smokestack of the fireplace has been removed and an approved masonry chimney will take its place. Other plans call for the rewiring of the electrical system, building new entrances and stairways from ground to third floors, remodeling of the cubicles, and constructing new men's and women's washrooms. In addition, a supplementary pipeline to assure an adequate water supply will be laid.

Volunteer efforts built the lodge, and we must turn to volunteer help to carry out the alterations. The lodge belongs to all club members; and whether you ski, or hike and swim in summer, or just spend a night there on the way to a vacation, you will remember your lodge with pleasure. Your help is needed there now. Craftsmen of all kinds are particularly invited, of course, but there is plenty of work that all can do. Plan to volunteer for every possible week end. Food and transportation are free of cost to the worker.

Volunteers should notify Virginia Clifford, 150 Lake St., Oakland 12 (Higate 4-6081), by postcard or telephone not later than 4 P.M. the Thursday before the proposed week end. Give your name, address, telephone, whether you need or can offer a ride, with any information on your skills. The leader for that week end will get in touch with you on the Thursday evening to issue further instructions.

All this reconstruction at the lodge may be somewhat discommoding to the paying guests during the summer, but it is hoped that the usual activities will be carried on. Certainly this work will not affect the fishing, hiking, swimming, and other pleasant outdoor summer living we enjoy at the Lodge.

### *And to the Climber's Guide*

The response to the plea for assistance in the work on the *Climber's Guide* has been magnificent. For the July record, at the date of this writing, it is gratifying to report that twenty-seven members have volunteered. This is a wonderful start, but more will be needed. Take another look at the article in the April SCB and you will see that it takes all kinds of spade-work and spaders, as well as climbers, to make a Guide. Whichever category you fit into, you are needed. Subsequent *Bulletins* will tell you more, but don't wait for them. Let's hear from you now.

Copies of the preliminary edition of the *Climber's Guide* are ready now—\$2.00.

Address requests to the club office.

## Keeping the Sierra Wilderness

By ROBERT CUNNINGHAM MILLER

*The mountains shall bring peace to the people.—Psalms 72:3.*

Dr. Miller, who is director of the California Academy of Sciences and managing editor of the magazine, *PACIFIC DISCOVERY*, attended all sessions of the High Sierra Wilderness Conference, which he here discusses, and served as chairman of the final session, which dealt with the reports of committees summarizing the results of other sessions. This significant conference—apparently the first ever to be devoted solely to wilderness problems—was called at the request of a director of the High Sierra Packers' Association and sponsored by the Sierra Club under the immediate direction of Miss Charlotte E. Mauk, assistant secretary of the club. "The conference," said Miss Mauk, in an announcement, "is intended to include those whose interest in the High Sierra Wilderness is (a) commercial (because their continuing livelihood depends on the maintenance of this country as true wilderness), (b) professional (because they are charged with administering the primitive reserves), or (c) recreational (because they turn to wilderness as a vacation resource)." General chairman was Francis P. Farquhar.

The following article was taken from the Spring number of *The Living Wilderness*, quarterly publication of *The Wilderness Society*, Washington, D.C.

FROM MONO LAKE to Tioga Pass, California Highway 120 traverses some of the most magnificent and unforgettable high country on the North American continent. Do not try it if you are a timid driver. The highway seems hardly more than a winding trail on the mountain side and there is no guard-rail. But once you have worried your way to the top, you may well enjoy one of the great experiences of your life.

At Tioga Pass you cross the summit of the Sierra at an altitude of 9,941 feet above sea level. You pull your car to the side of the road so other people can pass, but for a number of minutes nobody

passes; there is not much traffic here. You put your hands on your chest and inhale deep draughts of the fresh mountain air. You look at the highway over which you have come—a winding scratch on the canyon wall—and are inwardly glad you don't have to drive back down it again. Then you look at the crags that tower above you. You realize you are nearly ten thousand feet up, and yet the reason the road is here is that this is one of the low places in the Sierra—one of the few points at which you can get across. You think of remote and unbelievable places like Shangri La. You have a feeling of being on the roof of the world, or perhaps, better, on the eaves of the world, with the roof still high and steep above you.

Presently a car comes by, and you are irritated. It breaks the spell. You are sure the people hurrying by in that dusty red roadster do not appreciate this scene the way you do. You hate the thrum of internal combustion engines, and resent the idea of mechanized transportation intruding upon this high and solemn place. It seems like driving a truck into Canterbury Cathedral.

Then you remember that your own tried and trusted 1940 sedan is standing there by the highway, waiting for you to get in and step on the starter, and go rolling down to Tuolumne Meadows, a vast and beautiful mountain meadow area once accessible only to hardy hikers. You begin to sense a certain inconsistency between your habit of going everywhere by automobile and your love of primitive wilderness.

WELL, you tell yourself, there is a way out of this dilemma. You will, for at least a limited period now and then, abandon the automobile and the highway map, take a pack on your back, and go hiking off into places automobiles cannot go. Or you will go with a pack train and let a burro or a mule carry your supplies into places more distant than you can carry them

yourself. You will, for a little while, get completely away from modern, mechanized civilization, and find refreshment in the peace of the wilderness solitude.

Let us suppose that you carry out this good resolution. You decide to ally yourself with a group going in with a pack train because, after all, you don't know these mountains too well and it's been a long time since you camped out-of-doors. The packers know their way around and they are pretty good people to be with. So you go along with the pack-train, enjoying the scenery and the sunshine and sniffing the odor of the conifers.

By mid-afternoon you are pretty tired, and looking forward to making camp for the night. Presently you arrive at the camp ground—a meadow surrounded by forest. At least it once was a meadow; just now it looks like a dry and dusty paddock. It is accessible from the highway, and already there are two parties there with horses which they brought in trailers attached to their automobiles. Your packer looks worried. There is no grass. His pack animals are going on short rations tonight, and before morning they will have strayed off in all directions seeking better pastures.

The next morning the animals are rounded up after considerable trouble, and you start the new day's journey. You are getting into higher country now, and the second evening you come to a mountain meadow the automobile and the horse-trailer cannot reach. The grass is better here, but scattered around among it there are a couple of hundred rusty tin cans. Ah, wilderness!

But suppose you don't want to go in with a pack train—you are a rugged individualist and you want to carry your own pack and hike into the High Sierra. You pick out as your objective a mountain lake, accessible only by a narrow and tortuous foot-trail. After a couple of days of steady toil you reach your lake, and you find on it, like a weird excrescence, a light plane on pontoons, and nearby some men fishing for trout from an inflated yellow rubber boat.

Or maybe, instead of seeking a moun-

tain lake, you just want to climb into high country. You like the exercise, and you like the scenery, and you like the silence and the solitude. Presently the air gets thinner and the scenery finer. It strikes you as a beneficent arrangement of Providence that, the more frequently you have to pause for breath, the more there is to look at. Then suddenly, as you are perspiring, panting, and admiring, you hear a strange, unbelievable sound, and somebody comes roaring up the roadless mountain side in a jeep!

THESE ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS that today confront the person seeking relaxation in the High Sierra. They are problems of such urgency that the Sierra Club, an organization long distinguished for its effort to promote both the wise enjoyment and the permanent preservation of the Sierra wilderness recently saw fit to call a conference of persons interested in and concerned about the present situation.

The High Sierra Wilderness Conference, held in the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, California, April 8 and 9, 1949, was attended by at least 80 persons, including representatives of the Sierra Club, the United States Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, the High Sierra Packers' Association, the California Academy of Sciences, the American Planning and Civic Association (represented by its executive secretary, Miss Harlean James), the National Audubon Society (represented by its president, John H. Baker), and The Wilderness Society, which was represented by its executive secretary, Howard Zahniser.

(While the discussions were in progress, a mountain lion was reported seen in the outskirts of Oakland, but the assumption that it was on its way to attend the conference was never confirmed . . .)

There was even present an invited representative of the people who want to invade the wilderness in jeeps, and as a matter of fact he made a very good presentation of his arguments: This is a mechanical age; jeeping is a good sport; it takes intel-



ligence and skill to drive a jeep through rugged roadless country; people who like jeeping are just as much entitled to their preference as people who like hiking; and—with a jeep—you can take elderly and infirm people into wild and beautiful country they would never be able to reach on foot or on horseback. In his peroration he coined an epigram, "After all, a jeep is just a man-made mule, while a mule is a God-made mule." This occasioned a good deal of buzzing conversation, and some comments from the floor. It seemed that there were people present who were ready to challenge both ends of this syllogism!

Evidence was presented that jeeps tear up the landscape and can start serious soil erosion. It was also pointed out that if a jeep breaks down in roadless country, there is no way to get it out. It just stays there, and if there are any invalids aboard, they stay there too, till somebody finds a way to get them out.

**R**IGHT HERE I am going to depart from my role as a reporter and slip briefly into that of commentator. I want to go back to the opening paragraphs of this article, and to repeat that some of the most indescribably beautiful country in North America is already available to anybody able-bodied enough to ride in an automobile. We are thoughtful of the aged and infirm and well-disposed toward any proper effort to promote their happiness and enjoyment of the out-of-doors. But we are also aware that it is not possible in twenty years to visit all of the beauty spots that are already accessible by State and national highways. Let's keep a few places to serve as a challenge to those who are sound of wind and limb. We doubt that it is either necessary or desirable to take Aunt Minnie up a mountain in a jeep.

Another form of modern transportation that came in for a good deal of discussion was the airplane. On this there was considerable division of opinion. Some maintained that an airplane circling a mountain peak is a thrilling sight, while others regarded it as merely a loud and objectionable noise. The majority opinion seemed

to be that airplanes should be kept at a high ceiling if they fly over wilderness areas, and that people who hike to high mountain lakes in search of fishing or just plain outdoor beauty and seclusion, are entitled to some kind of assurance that they will not be harassed by visitors dropping in by hydroplane or helicopter.

One of the problems that came under long and serious discussion was that of the deterioration of high mountain meadows. Lowell Sumner, of the National Park Service, quoting somebody else we can not remember, described a mountain meadow as "a lake filled with earth." The important thing is the water table, which maintains the stand of grass and keeps the forest from invading the area. If a meadow is over-grazed, erosion sets in, a gully appears at the lower end, the water table goes down, trees invade the edges, and presently the meadow is gone. Many Sierra meadows are threatened in this fashion. The remedy is to reduce grazing—some thought was given to the feasibility of packing in hay for the pack animals, to reduce the grazing load on the meadows—and, where erosion has begun, to build check-dams and to build them in such a way that they seem to belong there and do not deface the landscape.

It is to be noted that, on points such as this, the attitude of the High Sierra Packers' Association is sound and cooperative. The packers are men who make their living by taking parties into the wilderness, and it would be easy to say that their interest is commercial. But when you know these men and talk with them, you become aware that the reason they are in this business is that they know and love the wilderness, and they want to keep it as nearly as possible the way they first knew it. They believe in clean camps, with burial or other proper disposal of tin cans and refuse. They believe in wise and careful use of wilderness resources. One packer stated that he had crossed a well-known "sportsman" off his list and flatly refused ever to take him into the Sierra again, because this individual insisted on catching his legal limit of trout every day, regard-

less of need, and then threw away the ones he couldn't use.

Other topics on the program discussed at length were: Trails in the High Country (trails should disturb the landscape as little as possible); High Country Administration Problems (greater uniformity was urged in the regulations in National Forests and National Parks, and a permit system for campers was advocated); Wildlife Management in Wilderness Areas; Education for Wilderness Travelers; Camping in the Wilderness; and—perhaps most important of all—Keeping the Wilderness Wild. This last topic was introduced by Howard Zahniser, executive secretary of The Wilderness Society, and amplified at the final dinner meeting of the conference, at which Mr. Zahniser was the principal speaker.

NOTWITHSTANDING the wide diversity of views expressed during the conference, a surprising degree of unanimity was achieved in the concluding sessions. To detail or even to summarize the committee reports, resolutions, and recommendations adopted as formal expressions of the first High Sierra Wilderness Conference would be beyond the scope of this article. But thinking back it seems to me that all of them were really directed to a single end—the development of a wilderness conscience.

As Richard M. Leonard of the Sierra Club pointed out, too much of our education for outdoor living has been in the tradition of the pioneer-hunter-trapper who had to destroy some of the wilderness in order to exist in it. In this tradition, you blaze a trail into the wilderness by slashing the bark off trees, you cut down saplings to construct a lean-to, you build a camp-fire big enough to scare wild animals away, and you go to sleep on a bed of balsam boughs. This is the kind of woodcraft most of us learned when we were boys, and unfortunately it still is being taught. It may have served an earlier generation well, but under today's conditions, with a constantly growing population and an ever diminishing wilderness,

such woodcraft practice is sheer outdoor vandalism.

Fortunately most of the people who have been taught that camping in the wilderness is a sort of wrecking operation do not actually try it out. If they did, they would be arrested.

But why do we continue to teach this sort of thing? Why not replace it with a different ideal?

The new ideal of wilderness camping is to leave the wilderness the way you found it, clean and beautiful and undisturbed. No tin cans, no half-burned egg shells left behind to mark your camp site, no orange peels, nor candy wrappers strewn along the trail. The best outdoorsman is he who can travel through the wilderness leaving the fewest possible traces of his having been there. That is the woodcraft of today.

If the American people can be educated to this new concept—through the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Camp Fire Girls, the outdoor clubs, the outdoor magazines—we may yet save what remains of our vanishing wilderness, including the Sierra wilderness; so that in generations to come, as in generations past, the mountains shall bring peace to the people who seek it in their vast, high solitudes.

## Labor Day Week End

We always like to suggest an interesting and unusual trip for over the Labor Day holiday, and so if you are not traveling to Atwells Mill to listen in on the Sierra Club Directors, we can think of no better idea than to attend the annual convention of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, to be held at Snoqualmie Pass in Washington, at the new Snoqualmie Lodge of the Seattle Mountaineers and at the Washington Alpine Club's Guye cabin. For if you can take the time, it will be well worth your while. The proceedings of the convention are always interesting, the host clubs will welcome you, and the beautiful country offers many places to go. John R. Barnard, California Vice President, will represent the Sierra Club. If you plan to go, let the hosts know soon.

## Butano Forest — Failure of a Mission

Scene: State Capitol, Sacramento.

Time: June 29, 1949.

Characters: Senate Finance Committee.

Senator Rich, Chairman: We will now consider Assemblyman Dolwig's bill, A.B. 2339, to purchase Butano Forest as a state park. The only aspect of the bill that we are interested in is the source of the funds.

Assemblyman Dolwig: For nearly twenty years, efforts have been made to preserve Butano Forest as a state park. These efforts have failed because the commercial value of the forest was so great that funds could not be raised to purchase it.

The most recent attempt to provide matching funds was through contributions by the Bay Area counties. This failed when San Francisco voters turned down a bond issue for \$250,000 for the Butano at the November election. As a result, this bill, A.B. 2339, has been introduced as a final effort to save this redwood forest for the people of California. It provides that the State Park Commission shall supply \$600,000 from the \$2,000,000 which still is unallocated in the Beaches and Parks fund. There will be no new taxes for the people of California and no appropriation will be required from the general fund. We feel that this is an emergency because the lumber company is now running a spur track into the Butano area. Once this area is cut, it will be lost forever.

I have here representatives from twenty-five civic and conservation organizations . . . . .

Chairman Rich: We don't care about your organizations. We want to know about the money.

Senator Donnelly: This bill would take from the Beaches and Parks fund \$600,000 to match the \$600,000 already allotted by the State Park Commission. When this Beaches and Parks fund was set up, \$5,000,000 of the total was earmarked for inland parks. This bill would rob the inland counties of their funds. When we get around to creating state parks in our own counties, the funds will all be gone. I'm against it.

Senator Swing: I have only one park in my county. We have enough redwood parks in California.

Senator Judah: I'm against the bill because it violates the matching fund principle.

Senator Jespersen: I move we table the bill.

Chairman Rich: Secretary, call the roll.

Senator Breed, No; Senator Collier (loudly), No; Senator Crittenden, Aye; Senator Donnelly, Aye; Senator Hatfield, absent; Senator Hulse, Aye; Senator Jespersen, Aye; Senator Judah, Aye; Senator Salsman, No; Senator Swing, Aye; Senator Rich, Aye.

Chairman Rich: The bill is tabled. We will now consider A.B. . . .

This in essence was the procedure at Sacramento which ended our legislative efforts to acquire the Butano. After encouraging results in the Assembly and the Senate Natural Resources Committee, we were stopped by the mistaken judgment of the senators from the interior counties that the acquisition of the Butano would rob their constituents of their opportunity to secure state parks.

Senators Crittenden (San Joaquin), Jespersen (San Luis Obispo), and Donnelly (Stanislaus) represented counties relatively close to the Butano and whose constituents would therefore stand to gain by the creation of a southerly redwood park which would provide facilities for weekend journeys to the coast to avoid the valley heat. Senator Judah from Santa Cruz voted against the bill, even though the creation of Butano State Park is vital to the preservation of Big Basin State Park in his county. The multitude of people visiting Big Basin is one of the great problems.

What next? Does anyone know where we can scrape together \$600,000 overnight? The failure of the San Francisco bond election in November, 1948, ended our first attempt to secure matching funds. The defeat in the legislature was strike two. We need a home run on the next pitch.

JOHN R. BARNARD



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